Research Highlights

Topic: Positive Behavior Support


**BOTTOM LINE**

Based on focus groups with nine individuals with disabilities with cognitive disabilities and/or autism, key themes focus on the conditions/barriers that they perceive cause problem behavior (for example, communication difficulties), possible solutions (for example, employment), and informational strategies (for example, easier access to relevant information). They clearly indicated a preference for more active involvement in and control over the interventions and supports that involve them.

**TIPS**

- Enable persons with disabilities to give key input regarding what they value and act upon this input. A collaborative approach needs to be used to support persons with disabilities.

- Listen to the perspectives of individuals with problem behavior to further delineate personalized quality of life variables.

- Expand opportunities for employment, preferred living situations, recreation/leisure opportunities, personal relationships, and opportunities for self-help.

- Provide more information to individuals with disabilities in the formats that they prefer.
KEY FINDINGS

- Some conditions/barriers that cause problem behavior include
  - Experiencing difficulty communicating with others.
  - Living in environmental circumstances that they dislike and that limit their freedom and privacy.
  - Being a recipient of programs that they found to not be helpful such as institutional placement.

- In order build practical, positive solutions to problem behavior, more important areas include
  - Having quality of life enhancements related to employment, living situations, recreation, relationships, and self-help.
  - Having helpful environmental supports such as sensory integration and stress management.
  - Having opportunities to learn through effective teaching.
  - Having other supports such as flexible funding and information.

- Preferences for information of products that would be helpful include learning through doing rather than reading and receiving information from people they know and trust.

METHOD

- Face-to-face focus groups and interviews were the source for data collection.

- There were nine focus group participants representing two subgroups:
  - Five participants were in group one diagnosed with having cognitive disabilities.
  - Four participants in group two were diagnosed with autism.

- All participants met the following criteria:
  - Minimum 13 years old
  - Engaged in problem behavior in the last 12-19 months. (Problem behavior is defined as: any serious episode requiring direct intervention.)

- Information was systematically coded using state-of-art qualitative procedures.


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